

Message Text

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21

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SUBJECT: INDEPENDENCE PARTY CONVENTION: DEFENSE ASPECTS

1. ALTHOUGH DOMESTIC ECONOMIC MATTERS LARGELY DOMINATED IP NATIONAL CONVENTION MAY 3-6, ICELAND'S DEFENSE RELATIONS WITH US AND NATO WERE FOCUS OF SIGNIFICANT ATTENTION. REFLECTING WHAT IP SOURCES TOLD US WAS OVERWHELMING CONFERENCE CONSENSUS (WHICH IN TURN WAS ACCENTUATED BY CONCERN OVER RECENT SOVIET NAVAL EXERCISES IN AREA) CONVENTION'S CONCLUDING DECLARATION CONTAINED STRONG ENDORSEMENT OF NEED FOR DEFENSE COOPERATION WITH US AND NATO AND WARNING AGAINST EXTERNAL PRESSURE. DECLARATION ECHOED SENTIMENTS EXPRESSED BY PM AND IP CHAIRMAN GEIR HALLGRIMSSON IN CONVENTION KEYNOTE ADDRESS.

2. CONVENTION'S CONCLUDING DECLARATION INCLUDED
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FOLLOWING EXERPTS:

"NOW AS BEFORE, ICELANDERS NEED TO INSURE THEIR SECURITY THROUGH PARTICIPATION IN NATO AND DEFENSE COOPERATION WITH THE US....INCREASED MILITARY ACTIVITY IN THE SEAS SURROUNDING ICELAND DEMAND THAT, MORE THAN EVER, THE TOTAL SITUATION BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN RESPECT TO SECURITY MATTERS IN THIS PART OF THE WORLD... (ICELANDERS) WILL OPPOSE ALL COERCION AND THREATS BY FOREIGN POWERS WHETHER THEY TAKE VERBAL OR PROPAGANDA FORM OR OTHERWISE, SUCH AS INCREASED AIR AND NAVAL ACTIVITY IN THE SURROUNDING AREA." PRIME MINISTER, IN HIS ADDRESS, DESCRIBED FATE OF UNPREPARED DEMOCRACIES BEFORE AND DURING WW II AND WARNED THAT MODERN-DAY AGGRESSORS AND DICTATORSHIPS WOULD USE THREATS AND PRESSURE IN SAME WAY TO EXPAND INFLUENCE. STRESSING THAT REDUCTION OF ICELAND'S DEFENSES WOULD CIRCUMSCRIBE COUNTRY'S INDEPENDENCE AND HAVE DETRIMENTAL EFFECT ON OVERALL NATO SECURITY, PM STRONGLY ENDORSED ICELAND'S EXISTING DEFENSE ARRANGEMENTS.
MARTIN

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